

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED at

BISHOPS-STORTFORD,

August 29. MDC LXXVII.

BEFORE

The Right Reverend Father in God,

H E N R Y,

Lord Bishop of *LONDON*, &c.

At his Lordships primary Visitation.

By J O. G O O D M A N, D. D.
Rector of *Hadham*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Royston, Bookseller to His most
Sacred Majesty, at the Angel in *Amen-Corner*, 1678.



TO
The Right Reverend Father in God,
HENRY,
Lord Bishop of *LONDON*,
One of the Lords of His MAJESTIE'S
most Honourable Privy Council.

My LORD,

W*Hen I composed the following Sermon, at your Lordship's command, I propounded no other thing to my self, but the doing service to the Souls of men, by inviting them into the Communion of the Church of Christ; and the animating and encouraging my Brethren of the Clergy, that labour in the same good and holy Work. Than which two things I knew nothing more seasonable and necessary for the Age we live in, or more compliant with your Lordship's Design in your Visitation. And therefore though I had a just Reverence of the Auditory, and a due sense of my own Imperfections; yet the aforesaid Consideration, together with that of your Lordship's Candour, would not suffer*

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me much to doubt, but that the Sermon would be approved by your Lordship, and accepted by all good and wise men that heard it.

For I called to mind, that as the Greeks say of their Goddes *Ῥῥεία*, Dea, Bona valetudo, placatur quâcunque re quis velit ei litare: so, however weak and sickly Minds (like cachectick Bodies) may be nice, phantastick and captious; yet those that are sound and strong are benign and generous; and with such, every thing that is sober, and well-intended, is well taken.

Nevertheless I must acknowledge, that when afterwards your Lordship declared your pleasure that I should print my Sermon, methought the case was altered: for being sensible before, how difficult a matter it was to contrive so copious a Subject (as I had before me) within the limits of an hour's Discourse, I was easily aware how much harder it would be (in so narrow a compass) to satisfie all the scruples and curiosities of those that should not onely have a transient glimpse, but a leisurely perusal. And besides, I was not ignorant how different the condition of a Sermon was, when presented in dead letters, from it self, when invivened by the voice and passion of a very mean Oratour.

But

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But after all, I considered it was my duty, not to dispute, but to obey, and that your Lordship's Judgment was sufficient for my security. And therefore (all excuses set aside) I here humbly present to your hand, what before I preached in your hearing.

And now, my Lord, having this opportunity, I crave leave, not onely to make acknowledgment of my own peculiar Obligations to your Lordship, (which I doe with a just sense of Duty and Gratitude,) but to report the Apprehensions of your Clergy in these parts of your Diocese, and the great Contentment they take under your Lordship's Government. They are greatly comforted by your Zeat for the Protestant Religion; encouraged by your Lordship's vigilant Care of their Interests and Concerns; directed in their Studies, Ministry and Conversation, by your prudent Counsels; animated by so great an Example; and especially obliged by the Benignity of your Presence and Condescension to them at your Visitation. All which they cannot forbear to express such a sense of, that they look upon it as a great Blessing of Almighty God, in committing this part of his Church to your Lordship's Care and Government.

For, my Lord, we cannot doubt but Piety and Devotion will commend it self to all that are serious:
that

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that Paternal Mildness and Clemency will work upon the ingenuous: that well-tempered Severity is the way to reclaim the vicious: and that Charity and Generosity will oblige all humane Nature. And therefore, where there is such a conjunction of real and powerfull Causes, we are able easily to calculate happy and signal Effects; as, that the Church shall recover its native and ancient Glory, and the Genius of this great People be marvellously improved. Which Successes that it will please the Great and True Oecumenical Bishop to crown your Lordship's Endeavours with, is the ardent desire of,

My LORD,

Hadham, Sept. 7.

1677.

Your Lordships

most dutifull

and obedient Servant,

J. Goodman.

A
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PREACHED

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BEFORE

The Right Reverend Father in G O D,

H E N R Y,

Lord Bishop of L O N D O N.

S. MATTHEW xvi. 18.

*Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will
build my Church; and the Gates of Hell
shall not prevail against it.*

AMongst the manifold infirmities of humane
Nature, there is scarcely any either more
Epidemical and common in Experience,
or more mischievous in its Effects and Consequen-
ces, than that which the *Greeks* very elegantly ex-
press.

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press by the name of *Ἀμετρία τῆς ἀνδολυμῆς*, and which I know not how more fitly to render, than by calling it *an Humour of running from one Extreme to another*: when men apprehending the evil and unreasonableness of some Opinion or Practice, are so far transported with zeal in detestation of it, as that, passing by the Mean of Truth and Sobriety, they rest not till they have fixed upon something else quite contrary thereto, though it be every whit as bad as that which they studiously seek to decline. *As if the utmost distance from what they are confident is false, were the only security that what they embrace is true.*

And perhaps, if we well observe, we shall find that most of those Evils which have deformed Religion, and troubled the Peace of the Church of God, have entred at this door. For evidence of which, amongst very many observations which I have at hand to this purpose, I will specify these two or three, which (I perswade my self) will neither be unacceptable to this Learned Auditory, nor remote from the business in hand.

The first Instance shall be the rise of *Arrianism*: touching which, it hath been the opinion of sundry wise men, and of the Learned Lord *Bacon* in particular, that that most unhappy Controversie sprang at first from an Antipathy to the Polytheism of the Pagans. Some men, it seems, being highly sensible of

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of the intolerable prostitution of the Divine Majesty, when the Honours peculiar to him were communicated with and shared amongst so many petty pretended Deities, out of zeal against this evil, outran the mark, and, that they might be sure to worship but one God, acknowledged but one Person; and so, whilst they went about to subvert Idolatry, denied the Trinity.

My second Instance shall be the observation of our Learned *Hooker*, to this effect: When some *German* Divines had strained their form of Presbyterian Government to a mighty height, had railed in the Communion with such strict Cautions and Conditions, that (the most part of Christians being secluded from it) it became more like a private Mass than the solemn Worship of the Church; and, to carry on this design the better, had brought in Lay-elders, as a new kind of *Censores morum*; up starts *Erastus*, and provoked by this Extreme, runs a risk, and falls into another as bad: for not content to disprove that new form of Discipline, and especially to degrade that novel Office, he proceeds to the denial of all Church-Censure and Ecclesiastical Government. *As if from such time as the Civil State became Christian, the Rights of the Church were escheated to the Prince or State.* And thus, as that Judicious person modestly expresses it, *the Truth was divided be-*

*Hooker in
Pref. to
Eccles. Polit.*

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tween

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tween the contending parties, but overseen and outran by both.

But the last Instance I will now make use of comes more home to my present business. When the Church of *Rome*, arrogating to it self an Infallibility, and asserting to the Pope an universal Pastorship, had under these pretences notoriously usurped upon all Christendome; there were not wanting those, who, seeing through this cheat, and desirous to reform all, bent things so far towards the other Extreme, that they endangered the breaking of all in pieces.

For whereas the *Roman* Church had claimed and exercised an exorbitant power of making and imposing what Articles of Faith she pleased; These were so far from that, as that they would scarcely allow the Church authority to define matters of Order and *Decorum*. Because the Governours in the *Roman* Communion were arrived at too great a height, the Bishops becoming (like the *Ephori* among the *Spartans*) able to check and controll Sovereign Princes; therefore, to avoid this danger, all shall be levelled to a Plebeian Parity. Before the interest of the Church was so great, as that it drew (under one pretence or other) almost all Causes from the Civil Tribunals to Ecclesiastical cognisance: but now to prevent this for the future, all Jurisdiction shall

shall be taken from it. In short, the Church was thought to be too rich before, *Religio pepererat Divitias, & filia devoraverat matrem*: now therefore the onely way to revive the Primitive Purity, is to reduce the Primitive Poverty. And so upon the whole matter, from an abhorrence of the Incroachments and Exorbitancies of the *Roman Church*, there arose a danger whether there should be any Church at all.

Now considering with my self how to obviate these and several other mischiefs of like nature, and to doe the best service I can to this Solemnity, I have made choice of these words of our Saviour for my subject, *Thou art Peter, and upon, &c.*

Wherein I observe these three things.

1. A Resolution or Decree of our Saviour, he will build him a Church.
2. The Foundation of this Structure, Upon this Rock will I, &c.
3. His Prediction of the Success and Duration of this Building, *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

I design to open these three things with the greatest plainness and perspicuity I can, because of the importance and usefulness of the matter; and yet with as much brevity as is possible, for I consider I speak to wise men.

PART I. Touching the First, (to avoid all impertinence,) that which I conceive our Saviour means when he saith he will build him a Church, is no more nor less than this, that he will incorporate all those that profess his Name and Religion into a Society. And that he will not content himself to have Disciples and Followers dividedly straggling after him, (how numerous soever they may be,) but he will have them united into a Body, formed into a regular Society, make up a Divine Polity, having Unity, Order and Government amongst themselves. That as there are several forms of Civil Society of Humane Institution; so our Saviour would by his Divine Authority institute a Religious Society by the name of a *Church*, whereof He himself would be the Head, and which should be ruled and governed by Laws and Officers peculiar to it self. Or, as in the Old Testament the whole Nation of the *Jews* (though distinguished otherwise by their respective Tribes and Families) made up one People and Church of *Israel*; so should all Nations upon Earth and every individual person that was a Christian, conspire and make up together one Christian Church.

For the more distinct and satisfactory apprehension whereof, let us consider, that every regular Society requires these four things; namely, 1. A Body, 2. An Head, 3. Union, 4. Order and Government:

ment: and all these conspicuously concur to the making up the Church, or such a Society as we have described.

1. For the Body of the Christian Church, that consists of all those who from time to time in all Ages and Countreys are inrolled in *Albo Christianorum*, and have given up their names to *Christ*, or are Christians by profession. So the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now are ye the Body of Christ, and Members in particular*; that is, the whole number of Christians Vid. Theophyl. in loc. makes up the mystical Body of *Christ*, every individual person being a particular Member thereof. And then he addes, vers. 28. *God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly Prophets, &c.* By which it is evident that he speaks of the whole Church as one: for he supposes the Apostles to be Officers of the whole Christian Church, which could not be, if every little parcel of Christians convened together made up a Church in the notion the Apostle intends; and consequently therefore the whole number of Christians (as I said) must make up the one Church or Body of *Christ*.

To this purpose, those that are curious observers of the propriety of phrase in the *Greek* tongue do note, that at *Athens*, (from whose Assemblies this name *Ἐκκλησία* was first taken) when onely the Heads or chief Magistrates were assembled, they
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called this distinctly Σύγκλησις when the *Colluvies* *ex agris* or whole Rabble of People was called together, this they termed Διάκλησις but Ἐκκλησία was onely used when the whole Body of Citizens within the Pale or Liberties of the City were assembled.

2. *Christ Jesus* is undoubtedly the Head and Supreme of this Body. He is the Founder of this Order, he gave command for the forming this Society, prescribes Laws and affords protection to it. *Eph. 5. 23.* *He is the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the Body.* And herein that which Divines call the *Mediatorian Kingdom* of our Saviour properly consists: namely, that not onely in respect of his Divine Nature he hath a Sovereignty over the world; but especially that as Θεάνθρωπος, or God incarnate, he is Sovereign of the Church, and hath power of Legislation, authority to constitute Officers under him, *jus vite & necis*, hath all Judgment committed to him, can sentence to life or to utter destruction. Whether *de facto* he hath appointed any Lieutenant or Vicar-general under him over the whole Church, as some pretend, will not be necessary now to inquire; and besides, will be sufficiently clear in the Negative by what I shall say by and by.

3. It is not sufficient to an orderly Society, that
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there be Head and Members, but there must be some Ligaments, to the end that there may be Union; that is, that all those Members of this Society, which lie otherwise scattered through so many Ages and Countreys, may both become united together, to make up one Body, and also joyned to their common Head *Christ Jesus*.

Now as in the natural Body the Nerves which perform this office proceed from the Head, so it is here; *Christ Jesus* hath delivered an Institution of Religion, the open profession of which is the Sinew of this Society, the Church: namely, all those that hold and maintain the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and especially of the New Testament, are united to the Church as Members, and to *Christ* as their spiritual Head. For this is the Charter of our Corporation, and contains the Laws of our Society: he that addes to this, distracts and divides the Church; and he that abates or diminishes it, inroaches upon the Prerogative of *Christ* the Head. The Church of *Christ*, and the profession of the Religion of *Christ* are of equal extent, and the Holy Scripture is the Standard of both.

But as a symbolical representation of this Union (we are speaking of,) or rather as a standing federal Rite of this Society, our Lord *Christ* hath also appointed the frequent participation of the holy Sacrament,

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crament; wherein we solemnly recognize him our Head, and our Fellow-Christians as Members of the same Body : which therefore is properly called the *Synaxis* or *Communion*. To which purpose the Apostle, allusively to the New Testament, speaks of the Church of the *Jews*, 1 Cor. 10. 2, &c. *they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the Sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, &c.* But more clearly and expressly of the Christian Church, vers. 17. *For we being many are one Body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* The sence of which place, and the summe of what I have been saying, is this, That as by holding and professing the Religion of *Christ Jesus* contained in the Holy Scripture we are united to him, and Members of his Church, materially; so it is our duty that this be solemnly and formally executed by those holy Rites of his institution.

4. But in the fourth and last place, it is not sufficient that there be an Union of the Head and Members, but there must be Order also amongst the Members themselves, otherwise it would be a Multitude, but not a Church. Wherefore in this Society, though, as we have said, all that profess and acknowledge the Doctrine of the Scriptures are Members, yet some of those are of an higher quality, and
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II

more publick use and influence, than others, namely such as bear Office in this Society. So saith the Apostle, Eph. 4. 11. *He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, eis κατασκευὴν τοῦ σώματος, i. e. for the orderly knitting of the Saints together into a Body, and for the edifying that Body of Christ.* These and their Successors are the Governours and Officers of the Church as a Church, or as it is such a peculiar, distinct and spiritual Society. To these the Head of this Society hath promised *his presence to the end of the world; to these he hath given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, saying, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, &c. and, He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that refuseth you refuseth him that sent me.* These, as I said, are the Governours of the Church as a Church. But because (as it was well observed by Optatus Milevitanus) *Respublica non est in Ecclesia, sed Ecclesia in Republica;* and it was not the design of our Saviour, in constituting this Society of a Church, to revoke or abrogate the Powers and Authority of the Civil State: therefore Kings and Princes (though as such they are not properly Officers of the Church in its peculiar consideration, yet) have and retain their ancient right of Legislation, and prescribing to the external management of this Society. In which re-

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spect it was said by the great and famous *Constantine*, that he was *Ἐπίσκοπος τῆς ἑξῆς*, that is, a Civil Bishop, or, as we commonly speak, supreme Governour or Moderator of the Church.

And now, having shewed what our Saviour meant, when he said he would build him a Church, it will neither be difficult nor unusefull to shew the Reasons of this Institution, *i. e.* Why our Saviour would not leave every single Believer upon his own score, but would have them associated and incorporated as aforesaid. The great usefulness of this Institution might easily be made appear in very many Instances: but I will mention but these three.

1. It pleased our Saviour *Christ* to require such a conjunction and combination of Christians, to the intent that by that means they might be the better able to hold up his Truth and Religion in the world. For if this had been left to the care of particular Christians singly and separately, such is the diversity of their Capacities and apprehensions, so different have been their Educations, are their Interests, and would be their Expressions, and so great would be the difficulty of holding intelligence and correspondence with each other, that it is not imaginable how the mind of *Christ* should have been uniformly and intirely represented to all those that
would

would have been concerned in it : therefore in regard this summe was too great to be laid out upon private security, it pleased him to deliver this great *Depositem* to the Society of the Church.

This is that which I take to be meant in that famous passage of the Apostle, *1 Tim. 3. 15.* where the Church is called *σῦλος καὶ ἐδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας*, *the pillar and ground of Truth.* I know well what perverse use they of the Church of *Rome* make of this Text, and what pitifull shifts some on the other side make to avoid that danger ; and therefore I thought it worth my labour, in a former Discourse of this nature, and at a like Solemnity, to vindicate the Text from the hands of those that abuse it, and the world by it. But at present it is sufficient to intimate, that though it be evidently true, that the truth of Christianity neither depends upon the Authority, nor needs the Warranty of men, yet was the Society of the Church a wise Expedient of our Saviour, for the holding forth and holding up his Religion in the world.

Nor let any one suspect that this will give any countenance to the unwritten Traditions of the Church of *Rome*, or evacuate the just Dignity and Authority of the Holy Scriptures : for it is and must be acknowledged, that the written Word is the immediate Conservatory of the Truth of the Gospel ;

yet the Society of the Church doth the same thing remotely and generally, which the other doth particularly and immediately : that is to say, this holds up the Holy Scripture, preserves and assures that as the Summe and Code of our Religion ; as on the other hand the Holy Scripture rules to us the particular Doctrines and Laws thereof. To which sence both *S. Austin* and *S. Jerom* agree, when they affirm, that as the *Jewish Church* was *Columna Nubis*, the Pillar of a Cloud, or was incorporated by God to hold up that Ceremonial form of Religion in the Old Testament ; so the Society of the Christian Church is *Columna Lucis*, or was instituted to hold up that Truth whereof the former was a shadow, namely the Doctrine of the Gospel, in the times of the New Testament. And *Saint Austin* more particularly expresses himself in his 42. Epistle, *Radix Christianæ Societatis, per Sedes Apostolorum & Successiones Episcoporum, certâ per orbem propagatione diffunditur* : i. e. Christian Religion is preserved and propagated by the advantage of established Order and successive Government of the Church.

2. *Christ Jesus* would have a Church, and his Disciples imbodyed and formed into a Society, that, by means of such conjunction and relation, they might be more usefull to one another, by instruction, admonition, counsel, reproof, and example ;

ple; and so not onely hold up the Doctrine joyntly, but hold one another mutually to the practice of Christianity, as having a common care and concern for the good of each other, for the sake of the whole.

To which purpose it is observed by the generality of Learned men, that *Gen. 4. 26.* and *6. 1.* in the Infancy of the World, there was a distinction between the Sons of God and the Sons of men: by the latter of which they understand that profane part of mankind that cast off all care of God and Religion; but by the former, such as retained a sense of God and care of his Worship; and that these formed themselves into a Body, and became a distinct Society, for the better practice and prosecution of that great affair of Religion.

But the influence which this Provision hath upon the practice of Religion is so notoriously evident, that the Apostle, *Heb. 10. 23,* &c. discourses after this manner to those *Jewish* Christians that seemed to stagger in their Devotion; *Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering: Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is. For, saith he, if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, &c.* The plain sense of which remarkable passage is this,

Thorndyke
Service of
God in
Religious
Assemblies.

this, that keeping Church-Society is the way to keep upright in our Profession, and warm in our practice; and the forsaking of that, the ready way to Apostasie: and no other tolerable sence can be made of the Discourse of the Apostle but this. To which I think it not amiss to adde a worthy Observation of that Learned man Mr. *H. Thorndyke*. He inquires, "What should be the reason, that the People of the *Jews* before their Captivity were upon all occasions prone to lapse into Idolatry, whenas after their Return from that Captivity they never seemed inclinable that way; and yet notwithstanding, before the Captivity they were never destitute of the extraordinary Admonitions of Prophets, sent from God on purpose to warn them of that sin and danger, and after the Captivity they were deprived of this singular advantage: And at last gives this ingenious and probable account; viz. "Before the Captivity, though they had the frequent Admonitions of the Prophets, as aforesaid; yet they had few or no Synagogues, insomuch as we never hear of any Synagogue-worship during all that time: but after the Captivity Synagogues were very numerous, and by means of the frequency of those Assemblies he thinks it might come to pass, that they were kept from an evil they were so prone

“prone to, that Prophecy it self could not cure
“them of it.

3. Church-Order was appointed to fit and train men up for the Kingdom of Heaven ; to teach and inure men to live in Love and Peace and Order here in a Church Militant, that so they might be fit for eternal Society in the Church Triumphant.

It seems to be one reason, (amongst many others) why those that are designed for the Service of the Church are usually bred up in Colleges and Universities ; namely, that Collegiate life accustoming them to Order and Obedience, disposes them to be subject to the Government of the Church. And as a College is an Embleme of the Church, so is the Church below of that above ; and the Education in the one makes men fit Candidates of the other. For it is not to be imagined that any mere Ornaments of Knowledge and Eloquence, or any other Gift or Grace, how eximious soever, can qualifie a man for the celestial Mansions, and make him fit to live in eternal Love and Peace and Concord with holy Spirits, that could not be brought to be peaceable, humble and obedient, and submit to the Culture and Discipline of the Church. There were therefore (upon the whole matter) great Considerations why our Saviour should build a Church. And so much for the First part of my Text.

PART

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PART II. I proceed now to the Second, the Foundation of this Fabrick, *Upon this Rock will I build my Church.*

I am sure it can be no new thing to Learned men, to note what triumphs they of the Church of *Rome* make upon this passage. *Tu es Petrus* is urged upon all occasions; as if not onely *S. Peter*, but the whole Succession of Popes were hereby made infallible Oracles of Truth, and universal Pastors over the whole Church of *Christ*.

If we object that *Petrus* and *Petra* are two things, they will answer, that our Saviour spake in the *Syriack* tongue, and that there *Cepha* answers to both. But if we enquire why *Rock* must needs signifie *Head of the Church*, or why to be built upon as a *Rock* must signifie to govern; especially if we inquire why *S. Peter* might not have a Priviledge conferred upon him, that such a man as *Hildebrand*, *Boniface*, *Imocent*, or some other either ignorant, lewd or enormous Bishops of *Rome* were not fit for: we should receive but slender satisfaction from them.

However I will not insift upon those Subtilties, but deliver my self plainly, for the unfolding this part of my Text, in these two Points.

1. It is notoriously evident to any man that consults the Scriptures impartially, that the whole number

ber of Apostles have that said of them which is tantamount to this in the Text : I mean, the Church is said to be built upon them as well as upon S. Peter. For example, *Eph. 2. 20.* the Church is said to be built upon the foundation of the Apostles, Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone : that is, Christ Jesus first set on foot the Doctrine of the Gospel, and gave them, his Apostles, both commission and abilities to preach it, and gather Disciples, and form them into the Society of a Church ; and they accordingly did so. Again, *Rev. 12. 1.* the Christian Church is described by a Woman clothed with the Sun, having the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a Crown of twelve Stars, i. e. shining and glorying in the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles. But more plainly *Rev. 21. 19.* the New Jerusalem, that is, the Christian Church, is said to have twelve foundations, answerable to the number of the Apostles.

To which purpose it is farther considerable, that the generality of the Fathers either make the *Petra*, or Foundation here in the Text, to be the Faith and Profession of S. Peter, which was the Belief of all the rest, (though, according to the usual zeal and promptness of S. Peter, first uttered by him :) or else they conceive this dignity to have been conferred upon S. Peter in the name of all the rest. According to the former of these goe S. * *Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, *Epiphanius*, *S. Austin*, and several others : * S. Chryss. in Matt. Hom. 55. Theophyl. in loc. Epiph. c. Cathar. Aug. trac. 10. in 1. Joannis.

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but

† Orig. tr.
1. in Matt.
Cyp. Ep.
27.
Tert. de
Pudic.
c. 21.

but † *Origen*, *S. Cyprian*, *Tertullian*, and some others, the latter way.

S. Ambros.
Serm. 47.

2. But we will not stick to grant that *S. Peter* had something peculiar conferred upon him here by our Saviour, namely this, that he should have the honour first to plant the Christian Faith, and so lay the first foundations of Christian Churches, both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Which is not onely the very account which *S. Ambrose* gives of the meaning of this Text, but that which appears eventually true in the History of the *Acts*. For accordingly, Chap. 2. by a Sermon of his on the day of Pentecost he converted 3000 Souls to the Faith of *Christ*, all which vers. 41. were *baptized*, and formed into the order of a Church, and were the First-fruits of the *Jews*. Again, Chap. 10. he is sent to *Cornelius*, and converts and baptizes him and his Family; and so laid the foundation of the first Church of the *Gentiles*.

Cambr. My-
rothec.

So that the meaning of this part of my Text is no more but this, that *S. Peter*, in reward of his forwardness in confessing *Christ Jesus*, should have the honour to lay the first Foundation of his Church, as aforesaid. And of the truth of this interpretation I perswade my self any indifferent person will be abundantly satisfied, that will take the pains to consult the Learned *Camero* upon the place.

PART III. I now hasten to the Third and last Part of my Text, namely, the Prediction of
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our Saviour touching the event of this business, the Success and Duration of this Structure, *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

And here we have great variety amongst Interpreters. Some, considering that Gates use to be the greatest Strengths and most fortified places, think that by *the Gates of Hell* is meant the Force and Power of the Devil and infernal Spirits; and that consequently the meaning of our Saviour is, that all the Persecutions which the Devil and his Agents raise against the Church shall never be able to destroy or extinguish it. Others, remembring that of old time the Gates of Cities used to be the places of Counsel and Judicature, therefore think that by *Gates of Hell* is meant the Cunning, Craft and Policy of the Devil; and that the meaning of the Prediction is, that neither the Plots and Machinations of the Devil and his Instruments shall take place against the Church, nor particularly those Heresies and wicked Opinions which he suggests and foment against it shall ever be able to corrupt and deprave it.

I do not quarrel with either of these interpretations, but I observe they both proceed upon a mistake of the notion of *ᾍδης*, which I will endeavour briefly to rectifie, and then all will be easie.

Now it hath been made plain by several Learned men, (particularly by the Learned Dr. *Windet* of late,) that *ᾍδης*, which we render *Hell*, doth not

A Visitation Sermon.

signifie the place or the state of Hell-torments, or the punishment of the damned, either in the ancient Greek Authors, or with *Hellenistical* Writers, either the Septuagint, or the Writers of the New Testament. There is indeed one onely passage in the New Testament that looks towards such a sense, and that is *Luke* 16. 23. where, as we render it, the rich man is said to be *in Hell*: but that is reconcileable enough with the rest, if it be duly considered.

But the general signification of ^{Adms} imports onely the state of death, or of the dead, without relation to reward or punishment, misery or happiness; which these instances (amongst many that might with like ease be assigned) will make evident. *Acts* 2. 24. that passage of the Psalmist is applied to our Saviour, *It was not possible for him to be held by the bands of death*; and vers. 27. the phrase is varied, and there it is said, in the same sense, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*, that is, thou wilt not leave me under the power of death, or in the condition of separate souls, but wilt raise me up again. And more plainly *Rev.* 20. 14. *Death and Hell are cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*; that is, Mortality is destroyed, the state of Corruption and Death are dissolved, or, as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, *Mortality is swallowed up of Life*.

For the confirmation of both which interpretations, I will add the Observation of * Learned men upon

* See Bish.
Usher de
Symbol.
Bishop
Pearson on
the Creed,
Artic. 5.

on that Article of our Creed, where *Christ* is said to have descended *eis ᾧδης* into *Hell*. They note, that in very few of the ancient Creeds those words [*eis ᾧδης*] are to be found ; and especially that wherever they are to be found, there those other words [*dead and buried*] are left out, save onely in the *Aquileian* Creed, where indeed both the phrases are used. Whereupon it follows, that in the sense of Antiquity Death and *ᾧδης*, or to be in *ᾧδης*, (which we render *Hell*,) and to be in the state of death, were tantamount expressions.

So then the meaning of our Saviour in my whole Text is this ; *I will, by the Ministry of my Apostles, and by thy especial agency, (Peter) gather Disciples to my Name and Doctrine, and I will have these formed into the orderly Society of a Church, united to Me their Head, and to each other as in a common Body, having Laws, Officers and Government peculiar : And this my Church shall continue in the World as long as the World it self lasts, subject to no Fate, Mortality or Intercision ; nothing shall ever supplant or supersede it.*

And thus I have, according to my promise, with all possible brevity explained the Doctrine of my Text. Let me now crave leave to press the Consequences of this Doctrine (upon your Practice) suitably to the present occasion, and I will conclude. I will confine my self to these three Inferences.

First, Since our Saviour took care to found a
Church,

Church, let us be of this Society, and value the Priviledge of being of *Christ's Church*.

Secondly, Since there is such a mighty Usefulness of this Foundation and Society, let us especially that are Officers thereof endeavour to uphold it, and do it all the Honour and Service we can.

Lastly, Since our Saviour hath prophesied, that all *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, let us all, that love God's Church, bear up our selves against all Discouragements and Despondencies on the truth and infallibility of his Prediction.

I. A P P L I C. Touching the first ; To be of the Christian Church is to be of the most honourable Society in the whole world. It is to be of an Order whereof the Lord *Christ* is Founder and Protectour, and whereof all the holy Angels are admirers : to be incorporate into the Fellowship of Apostles ; Prophets, Martyrs, and all holy men : to be of that mystical Body of which the Son of God is Head : to be Citizens of the *new Jerusalem*, Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God.

Observe what glorious things the Apostle speaks *Hebr. 12. 22, 23, 24. Ye are come to mount Sion, to the City of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born whose names are written in Heaven, to God the Judge of all, to Jesus the Mediatour of the new Covenant, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*

And

And all this means nothing else but, You *Jews* are translated from *Moses* to *Christ*, from your old Synagogue to the Christian Church.

God's Church is his Family, which he especially takes care of and provides for. He that is of it, is under the *Shechinah*, the wing of the Divine Majesty, and his special Providence.

His Church is his Vineyard, and he not only *sets a hedge about it*, but *builds a watch-tower in it*. No Nation under heaven had such signal instances of God's presence and blessing as the people of the *Jews*, whilst they continued to be his Church: but when they ceased to be a Church, they ceased to be a People, were the most abject and contemptible rabble upon earth.

Above all, to be of God's Church is to be under the means of Grace, the Dew of Heaven, the motions of the good Spirit, and the hopes of Glory. For to the Church hath he promised his presence and assistance; there are dispensed the lively Oracles of God, there hath he provided a constant succession of Dispensers of the bread of life, to fit it to all needs and all Capacities.

Is it a small security to our minds, or satisfaction to our Consciences, that we are not left to the deceits and whispers of a private spirit, to personal conjectures or secret insinuations, but have the publick Doctrine of the Church?

Is

Is it not a great encouragement of our Prayers, when we are fortified against the just reflexions upon our own meanness and demerits, by the concurrent Prayers of all God's people, and mingle our devotions with theirs, that so they may together come up a sweet odour before God ?

Is it a small advantage to joyn in that holy Leaguer, and besiege Heaven by conjoynd and ardent importunities ? *Coinus in cœtum*, (saith Tertullian) *ut ad Deum quasi manu factâ precationibus ambiamus orantes.*

Can it chuse but be a great animation and encouragement to us, to have before our eyes all the great Examples in God's Church ?

Is it not a mighty matter, to have our Faith strengthened and enlivened, our Love inflamed, our Comforts raised by the holy Communion ? Will not the flame of others kindle our Zeal and Affections ? And shall it not put us into an ecstasie of Devotion, to see as it were *Christ* crucified before our eyes, opening his Arms to us, and pouring out his Blood for us ?

Socrates is said to have given solemn thanks to God, (amongst other things) that by his Providence he was a Philosopher, and not a Barbarian : and shall the twilight or dawnings of natural light be more ravishing than the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness ?

Shall *Tully* break out in a kind of ecstasie, *O philosophia, unus dies ex præceptis tuis actus peccanti immortalitati*

tati est anteponendus ? and shall not we much rather break out with the Psalmist, *A day in thy courts is better than a thousand* ; and, *I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness ?*

The Chief Captain, *Acts 22. 28.* gloried that he was a free Citizen of *Rome*, and thought it worth the purchase of a great summe of money ; But, saith *S. Paul*, *I was free-born* : and is it a small thing to us, that we are born and brought up in the Church of God ?

The *Romans* generally had such an opinion of the Augustness of their City, that to be proscribed or banished was counted a capital punishment, and a civil death thought equal to a natural.

The *Pythagoreans*, when any one forsook their School, were wont to carry out a Coffin for him attended with a funeral pomp. And shall we esteem those alive that forsake the Church, the School of *Christ* ?

The Primitive Christians had such an esteem of the dignity and Priviledge of the Church, that *Cætu arceri*, to be Excommunicate, was so dreadfull a doom, as that those that pronounced the Sentence were wont to doe it with weeping and lamentation. *Ye ought to have mourned*, saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 5. 2.* and, *2 Cor. 12. 21.* *I shall bewail many.* And to be cast out of the Church, and to be delivered up to Satan, were accounted equivalent. *Nam judicatur magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei conspectu, summumque futuri Judicii præjudiciam est, si quis ita deliquerit, ut à communione orationis & omnis sacri commer-*

cui relegitur, saith *Tertullian* in his Apology for Christianity.

And who is there that hath been conversant in Church-Antiquity, that hath not observed what repentance and tears, what solicitations and intercessions, what humble prostration of themselves were used by those that were fallen under the Censures of the Church, to obtain restitution to Peace and Pardon? And who that remembers this would ever have thought there should have come a time, when it should be esteemed a matter of glory, and a point of Saintship, to cut off one's self voluntarily, and become a Separatist from the Church?

The Church of *Christ* is the same it was, and the blessings and advantages of it are still the same: let us endeavour therefore to raise up its Glory, to recover the ancient Zeal, and to restore its Veneration. And let us all say with those in the Psalm, *Come let us go up to the House of the Lord: Our feet shall stand within thy Gates, O Jerusalem.*

II. APPLIC. And this leads me to my Second Application, and to address my self to the Clergy. You, my Reverend Brethren, are not only Members, but Officers of this Society: give me leave (being in this place) to recommend to you very earnestly the doing all the honour and service you can to the Church of *Christ*. Put the case we have but slender Encouragements, and live in an ungratefull Age, that men will misinterpret our Zeal, blaze our Infirmities, resist our Endeavours, and oppose their own good: yet we are in an honourable

Em-

Employment, we serve a good Master, and shall not lose our reward. Therefore let me take the confidence to press upon you the following particulars.

First, Let us be sure, for the sake of the Church, to pay such Reverence to our Superiours in it, as may render them Venerable in the eyes of all others. For assure our selves, that if we slight their Persons, and dispute their Injunctions, we teach other men to despise them and our selves too, and ruine the whole.

It is a memorable passage of our Saviour, *Matt. 3. 13, &c.* He comes to *John* the Baptist to be baptized of him: *John* forbids him, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee, &c.* And it is certain our Saviour had no need of Baptism, having no stain of Sin upon him: notwithstanding saith our Saviour, *Suffer it to be so now, for it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness*; that is, saith *Hugo Grotius*, it became the Son of God and Saviour of the World, to give publick honour and veneration to the Ministry of *John* the Baptist. And most certainly, what became our Saviour towards him, who (as he acknowledges) *was not worthy to unloose his shoe-latchet*, must needs become us towards those that God and man have made our Superiours.

In the next place let us take care to submit our private Sentiments to the Judgment of the Church, and not oppose our private Opinions to the publick Doctrine. It was a memorable discourse of *S. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *Ep. 1. Chap. 11.* When he had been delivering his judgment about Long hair, and such other matters of

decency, to the reasons he gives of his judgment in those affairs he subjoyns these words, vers. 16. *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God.* As if he had said, If the reasons I give prevail not with you, yet the Practice of the Church is with me, and the Custom of the Church ought to be sufficient to rule such a Case.

Thirdly, Let us remember it is Church-work we are imployed about, and that work is to be done in peace : we must therefore gain upon men by love and gentleness, oblige them by condescension and goodness, not exasperate and drive them from the Church by passion and frowardness. Especially we must be sure, that we represent not the terms of our Communion narrower than needs must, lest we depopulate by such Inclosures, and make the Church become a Conventicle : but consider well the importance of those words of our Saviour, *He that is not against us is with us.*

It is recorded by several Historians, that when the *Persians* had wasted *Greece*, and amongst other instances of Barbarity had also burnt down the Temples of their Gods ; the *Greeks*, when they emerged from the Calamity, and recovered their own Territories, would never after re-build the ruines of those Temples, but left them as they were, that they might be Monuments of the *Persians* Barbarism, and keep up in the *Greeks* an everlasting odium and detestation of them.

Pausan. in
Beot.

But *Pausanias*, on the other side, observes it to have been the wisdom of the *Macedonians*, that in
none

none of their Conquests they ever erected any Trophies, lest whilest they perpetuated the memory of their Victories, they perpetuated also the Quarrel, and provoked their Enemies to an immortal shame and hatred, and to watch an advantage by some fatal revenge to blot out their own infamy.

I need not in this Auditory make any Application of these two Stories : yet because I would be understood by all, I express my meaning thus. We of this Church have several sorts of Enemies. There are some we can never have peace with, nor security from; we must cheat our selves, if we think of any syncretism or coalescency with them : with such therefore the terms of distinction must be maintained, we must stand upon our guard, and quit our selves like men ; there can be no accommodation, nor peace, nor truce, but what is fallacious. But there are others of whom there is hope that they may be gained : and all that I say is this, in such a case let us rather endeavour to make them good, than exasperate them by remembring that they have been evil, or reproaching them for what they have done amiss.

But above all let us not forget to honour and adorn the Church by true Piety and Vertue. A very bad Opinion recommends it self with great advantage, if the promoters of it seem pious and devout : but Profaneness and Immorality, if it will not confute, yet will shame and baffle the best Profession in the world. Therefore, my Brethren, let not us onely have our *Loins girt*, but our *Lamps burning* : That if any shall have the folly to reproach,

reproach our way as a cold formal Devotion, we may effectually convince and shame them by the Holiness of our Lives, the Heavenliness of our Minds, by a great and quick sense of God, and a remarkable Devotion. That it may be said of us as of the Ministers of Religion in *Origen's* time, *Hi sunt qui vivunt ut loquantur, & loquantur ut vivunt.*

S. *Hierome* observes of the *Platonists* and *Stoicks*, that they were wont to hold their Conferences and Disputes commonly in the Porches of the Temples: of which he imagines this to have been the reason, *Ut admoniti augustioris habitaculi sanctitate, nil aliud nisi de virtute cogitent.* Let the Sanctity of God's House, wherein we daily minister, and the Majesty of the living God we serve, awaken and keep alive in us a constant Gravity, and quick sense of Piety. And then the most Sceptical men will be ashamed to blaspheme Religion, and call it a meer Juggle of the Priests, when they see us live under the Power of it. And then shall the Divine Glory descend upon us and our Church, as it was wont to do upon the Ark of God.

III. APPLIC. But to come to a Conclusion: Let us encourage our selves touching the estate and prosperity of the Church by the Prediction of our Saviour, that *all the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* Let us not be disquieted with rumours of the strength and number of its Enemies. Though *Ammon* and *Amalek*, the *Philistines* and Inhabitants of *Tyre*, I mean, though Atheist, Sceptick, Papist, Fanatick, all combine against

gainst it, the Prediction of our Saviour shall stand.

Josephus reports of the *Jewish* Priests, that when *Pompey's* Army rushed rudely into the Temple of *Jerusalem*, when the Priests were busie about the Sacrifice, and filled all with amazement and consternation, the Priests went on with their business, neither laid aside the Sacrifice, nor performed any part of it tumultuarily or timorously. They, it seems, considered they were doing their duty, and imployed in God's work, and therefore did not doubt but he would defend them and bear them out. So let us do our work undauntedly and couragiously, that neither the Scoffs of Atheists abash us, nor the rude Follies of Ignorant persons move us, nor the Conspiracy of all together tempt us to such meanness of spirit, or weakness of Faith and Courage, as to grow despondent, and say with *David* at a low ebb of mind, We shall one day fall by the hand of *Saul*: but rather imitate that bravery of his with which he dismay'd and conquered *Goliath*; *The Lord delivered me from the mouth of the Lion, and from the paw of the Bear, and shall deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine.* To which purpose let us call to mind the miraculous Providence by which this Church was reared in King *Edward* the Sixth and Queen *Elizabeth's* days; and withall consider by what admirable Providences it was restored and revived in our days: and then surely we shall conclude it a fabrick of God's building, and which he will ever protect.

But if any shall be so diffident as to say, It may be true of the whole Church, that *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail*

vail against that, but this part of it, or this particular Church may perish : for answer, I appeal to whosoever impartially reads the Scriptures, and hath perused Ecclesiastical History, to say, if he can, whether any Church in the whole world is more truly Evangelical than this, or comes nearer, either for Doctrine or Government, to those founded by the Apostles themselves. And if this be so, why should we doubt of the continuance of the Divine Providence over it ?

To which I adde, for a Conclusion of all ; Look over the History of all Times and Countreys, of all States and Kingdoms, and consider if ever any orderly and considerable Society in the world was dissolved otherwise, than by being broken and divided in it self. And let the consideration hereof oblige us to the truest Love and firmest Union amongst our selves. Our Saviour hath told us, that *a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand* ; and the very Kingdom of Satan requires Order, and subsists by Unity. Let it not be true in every instance, especially in this fatal one, that *the children of this world* (much less the subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness) *are wiser than the children of light*. But let us (as I have said) sincerely practise our Religion, courageously own our Profession, and *maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace and Love amongst our selves* : And then *all the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against us*. Which God of his mercy grant through *Jesus Christ our Lord* : To whom, &c.

FINIS.

